

**THE BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION ('BJA') ('ASSOCIATION')**  
**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON SATURDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 10:30AM**  
**GEORGE KERR SUITE, WALSALL CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON,**  
**GORWAY ROAD, WS1 3BD & VIA ZOOM**

**Present:**

|                |                |     |
|----------------|----------------|-----|
| Rowena Birch   | President      | RBi |
| Tony McSweeney | Vice President | TS  |

**Council Members:**

|                           |                                   |    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|
| Denise Oates              | Eastern Area                      | DO |
| Robin Newett              | Northern Ireland Judo Federation  | RN |
| Darren Dean               | Welsh Judo Association            | DD |
| Marion Woodard            | Southern Area                     | MW |
| John Thacker              | Navy Judo                         | JT |
| Stephen Watson            | Navy Judo                         | SW |
| Matthew Clempner          | Police Sport UK & North West Area | MC |
| Nadia Minardi             | London Area                       | NM |
| Seth Birch (from 10:45am) | Yorkshire & Humberside Area       | SB |

**British Judo Association:**

|                |                            |      |
|----------------|----------------------------|------|
| Ronnie Saez    | Chairman                   | RS   |
| Andrew Scoular | Chief Executive (via Zoom) | AS   |
| Colin McIver   | Sport Director             | CMcl |
| Joyce Heron    | Deputy Sport Director      | JH   |
| Justine Lynch  | Notetaker                  | JL   |

**Apologies:**

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Dr Colin Draycott   | Senior Vice President  |
| Richard Barraclough | Vice President         |
| Mick Leigh          | Vice President         |
| Brian Davies        | Vice President         |
| Garth Illingworth   | Northern Area          |
| Dave Allen          | Western Area           |
| Roger Houston       | Midlands Area          |
| Stephen Milne       | Armed Forces           |
| Marion Woodard      | Southern Area          |
| David Rance         | Northern Home Counties |
| Jim McKenzie        | Army Judo              |

- 1 **Welcome**  
 RBi welcomed all attendees and thanked them for giving up their time. Apologies were noted as detailed above.
  
- 2 **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 August 2021**  
 Minutes agreed as a true and accurate report of the meeting.  
**Proposer: DO**  
**Seconder: JT**

### 3 **President's Remarks**

RBi advised that it had been a busy November and December since being elected including a well attended Club Consultation and Open Day at the National Training Centre. RBi also wished credit to be noted for the Performance Team for overcoming many obstacles in order to get the team to the Olympics and Paralympics and also on the medal success.

On the British Championships in December 2021, RBi commented that it had been an extremely enjoyable and professional event made even better with the inclusion of the top players with it being an open entry competition. AS added that there were internal discussions taking place around continuing to keep this as an open competition, whilst taking in to consideration any effect on the Areas as the competition attracts ranking points.

RBi then passed over to RS for his report.

### 4 **Chair's Report**

RS advised that his report would primarily focus on 3 areas: Governance & Board matters; participation and performance.

#### **Governance & Board**

- Governance Review to commence in early May with a report presented to the Board at the August meeting. The last review was in 2017 so good practice to conduct a follow up one which would also ensure we are compliant with the revised UK Sport (UKS) Code of Sports Governance. Also, will look at how Equality, Diversity & Inclusion should now be addressed in our Memorandum & Articles.
- Setting up a Judo Commission to take discussion on how we practice judo and the rules out of Board meeting discussions so that the Board can focus more on the business of judo. The Judo Commission would have 7 members with RS as Chair for the initial meeting, with a view to handing this over by the end of 2022, and would include 2 Board members and 4 non Board. Members will be by direct appointment with differing terms of 2 or 3 years to stagger offboarding/onboarding. This initial meeting will be scheduled late March/early April.
- Over the past 16 months, half of the Board members have been replaced, but the new Board members have already made a fabulous contribution and work continues with the onboarding of the 2 new elected Board members. There will be less changes this year but Peter Blewett will reach his maximum number of years, having had his term extended in order to keep him as our experienced England Judo member to cover the Commonwealth Games. Neil Fletcher will also be up for re-election this year.
- High level strategy has been produced. This is going to be shared with the Areas via Strategy Roadshows through March and April with AS and RS hosting. The roadshows are intended as a genuine opportunity for consultation and debate with the clubs at this proposal stage. Final draft to be presented to the Board for sign off at the April meeting.

#### **Participation**

- Over 80% of members have returned as at the end of January. With this being only 6 months after judo restarted, RS passed on praise to all volunteers and staff.
- Competitions have returned and the British Championships attracted a really good crowd despite this being at the time of the outbreak of the Omicron variant. However the event was run very safely with very few positive Covid tests. Also, when speaking to officials and coaches at the

event, it was clear how much they had missed judo and were very happy to be back at judo competitions.

### **Performance**

- Since the start of the IJF tour the athletes have been winning medals at most events with some fantastic performances from both the men and women.
- At the Paris GS, the most difficult tournament, we achieved 4 5<sup>th</sup> places.

RS concluded that it has been a terrible 2 years living through the pandemic but he was extremely happy with the progress of judo's recovery and shows it is still very important in the community. RS passed on thanks to AS and staff who have made fantastic achievements over the past 6/7 months. RS added that generally the Association is in a great position and now looking at getting judo back into schools as well as enhancing our digital resources which would also help take judo to the next level.

RBi thanked RS for his report and opened the meeting up for questions.

DO raised the Judo Commission and whether this created another layer between the membership and the Board. RS responded that there would be 2 Board members on this Commission and it would be where the detailed judo discussion would take place with any decisions made presented to the Board. RS added that as the members of the Judo Commission become known, members will have more people, not just the 3 or 4 Board members, to engage with at competitions etc.

NM queried how the Judo Commission would work with the Council. RS responded that this would work the same as for any other commission and also, the Governance review would include tidying up the commissions to come under one committee for a more cohesive approach. Council members are then the link to grassroots judo.

RBi thanked RS and moved on to the items 5 & 6 which AS and CMCl would cover.

### **5 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Business Plan Review**

Copies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Business Plan Overview had been made available at the beginning of the meeting and would be distributed along with the draft minutes.

### **6 Year to Date Update**

AS shared his presentation, advising this would also be circulated with the draft minutes.

JT raised that diversity is a key area for the Government currently. JH responded that approximately 7% of our members are BAME but between 60 & 70% select prefer not to say. AS added that we are now producing breakdowns of membership for the Areas and this is to be expanded for individual clubs which will assist in identifying where to target our resources.

SB then raised the level of grants that have been received, however people are being invited to participate in tournaments which they are expected to fund themselves. AS responded that this had been discussed by the A&RC but UKS funds are only for qualified fighters and some from England Talent. Also, there has been an increase of 40% in costs for attending competitions due to more expensive flights, covid testing, having to stay in designated hotels etc. AS continued that applications can be made to the British Judo Trust, also hoping that via the Area Partnership Agreements, the Areas will be able to contribute as

well as Active Partnerships should have a Talent Fund that can be applied for directly. AS added that it is host a junior camp and competition in the UK. RS commented that there are restrictions on how the money can be spent and it continues to be an ongoing issue.

SB requested that this subject be addressed during the strategy roadshows.

AS then raised the new qualification categories for our VI fighters which will mean that we now have 2 fighters in the same category but would only be allowed to take one to the Paralympics. Ongoing discussions with IBSA on this.

Lastly, AS advised that CMCI would be retiring in June although still staying on as a consultant to assist with specific projects.

RB thanked AS for his update and passed on congratulations for securing the above mentioned funding for the Association.

## 8. Any Other Business

SB raised the Area audits. AS advised that these would be on a rotational basis across the Areas and are intended as support visits to assist with the development of the Areas and any pick up on any issues they are having, not specifically classed as an audit. Also, to take shared learnings of good practice across the Areas. SB suggested moving all the Areas on to the same accounting system which AS acknowledged could make things easier but was not essential.

SB then raised funds that Areas may have in reserves and whether this was viewed as BJA funds. AS responded that it is British Judo money but it should be utilised in investing in the Areas. RS added that the Area Constitution does have a dissolution clause but decisions on any surplus are with the Areas but we would like a joint approach with the Areas. SB further commented that it would be advantageous if all areas moved on to the same accounting period although not necessarily the same accounting system.

RB thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution. With their being no other matters for AOB, the meeting was concluded.